

Iron County Register.

By ELI D. AKE

IRONTON. : : : MISSOURI

THE LOST DAYS.

I wish I had not gone
Back to the little town,
With all my wealth of memories, to sad-
ly fling them down;
That I had not more seen
The lazy little street
That idles down the hillside where the
town and country meet.

I wish I had not gone
To loiter and to look,
And miss the boy-time glories in the one-
time stinging brook;
One day it was so deep;
One day it was so wide;
One day it held cool shadows where the
sunshine went to hide.

I wish I had not traced
The roses once again,
And tried to find the redness and the
sweetness they had then;
Nor gone at early morn
To find them filled with dew,
Nor searched them for the honey that the
bees and I once knew.

I wish I had not walked
The little country lane
And hoped to hear the birdsongs with the
echoing refrain;
That I had not gone out
Upon the meadow grass
Expecting vagrant clover scent and mint
tang as I'd pass.

I wish I had not gone
Back to the little town
Back to my castle built in Spain, to see
them crumble down;
To fall for the songs
That rose so gladly then;
To wake—and never dream that I could
be a boy again.
—Chicago Daily Tribune.

THE DROWNING OF BLACK JACK

Yarn of the Sailor's Peculiar Sense
of Humor.

MEN who do not value the lives of
others often value their own
high enough. But this rule seldom
works the other way.

The reckless daredevil vagabond who
butts about in all sorts of
dangers and acquires a sort of con-
tempt for the various forms of death
he often faces, begins after awhile to
believe that every one else shares his
attitude toward what he considers at
the worst only a slight hastening of
the inevitable.

Such a man is the average sailor.
If half his shipmates are washed over-
board in a storm, Jack is depressed for
the time being, but a month later,
when he reaches port, he is quite apt
to give his account of the incident in a
humorous vein.

"Ye'd 'a' larfed," he says, in the
course of his tale, "if ye'd 'a' seen the
way Tim Hogan was a-hangin' on to
the end of the topsail brace, like a
bleessed herrin' hooked on the end of a
line. Then, when he couldn't hold on
no longer, he just gives a tremendous
wriggle, like he'd swallowed the bait
an' it was tasin' pretty good, an' off he
swims like he was lookin' for more, an'
an' that was the last we sees of Bill."

As a matter of fact, Jack did not
laugh at the time of the accident. His
companion of a drowning man cling-
ing to the end of a rope to a hooked
fish never entered his head until he
spun his yarn.

Time has given him that attitude
toward a form of death so common
that it may be his any day. When his
turn comes he will not laugh, but if
his ghost survives him it will probably
give an account to the other ghosts of
its entrance into the spirit world in
an equally humorous vein.

If you were to consult the log of the
American bark Southern Cross about
eight years back you would come
across an entry like this:

Chief Mate Hardy disappeared in the
middle watch. Supposed to have fallen
overboard while examining the log.

Such an entry is common in ships'
logs, and it might not excite much
interest in the average shore-abiding
citizen, but in the maritime world
there are some to whom it would re-
call memories of a strange personality
—Happy Steve.

How Happy Steve was connected
with the drowning of the mate of the
Southern Cross will develop later.
First of all, let me say a few words of
the mate.

I will hide Dick Hardy's identity un-
der his real name; none but a few
ship owners know him by that. Let it
suffice to say that under an alias some-
thing like Black Jack he was known
the world over as one of the blackest
scoundrels that ever trod a deck.

You could find tales of his heroic
brutalities from Frisco to Calcutta. In
his day boarding masters had to drug
sailors before they could ship them
on the Southern Cross—she was a
hard packet. To-day, I believe, she is
reckoned one of the most comfortable
in the American merchant marine.

I was present when the first au-
thentic account of his death was given
out by the one man who knew. This
was aboard the old Nicaraguan bark
Don Adolfo.

She had aboard a crew of hardy,
reckless west coast adventurers, most
of whom were on the west coast be-
cause it was not particularly healthful
for them to be anywhere else. Not
that they were really a bad lot, but
as I have already said, they were of
that class who had acquired an attitude
toward human life not compatible with
the laws of more civilized parts.

Cue of the men was a chap called
Happy Steve. It was his optimistic
temperament that had given him his
name. Come what would, hard
weather, topsails to reef, a leaky ship
to pump or, in fine weather, decks to
holystone, boats to scour with sand
and canvas, Steve always accepted
hardships with a jolly smile, while his
shipmates looked black and swore.

Steve could swear, too, but he did it
in such a humorous way that the foul
words on his lips lost their worst sig-
nificance. Even when he had a growl
with the captain it usually ended with
the captain's laughing and granting the
demand.

Usually an optimist is not a favorite
in a ship's forecastle, but Steve could
give everything such a humorous turn
that his shipmates would laugh in
spite of themselves. During the second

dog watch he kept the men in a contin-
uous roar of laughter with his tales
of past exploits.

We had passed the doldrums and
were well down into the southeast
trades, where the steady breeze made
it seldom necessary to pull a rope or
to touch a sail. In that respect it was
almost like steamboating. Our dog
watches were never disturbed, and
every man's artistic ability as a story-
teller was in full demand.

One evening the conversation turned
to hard-case Yankee packets, of ships
where men take and give blows with
deadly intent. Each man told of the
bucko mates he had known, and as al-
most every one had known Dick
Hardy, or Black Jack, he and his mys-
terious fate became the principal
subject for discussion.

"He was a bad 'un," commented
Kanaka Joe; "blessed if he weren't.
I've known hard-case mates, but most
of 'em was on the square in a fight.
Black Jack weren't; he was a mucker;
he'd hit a man when he was down."

"You bet," agreed another man;
"drownin' was too good for him. He
should 'a' been hamstrung first, then
hung by his arms in the main chains
an' then bled in a pot o' tar."

Here each man gave his idea of a
fitting end for Black Jack, and some
were quite ingenious. That is, all did
so except Happy Steve. He only
laughed, immediately as each man
presented his method.

"Come, Steve," said Kanaka Joe,
"how would you have him cooked?"

Steve laughed uproariously, while his
mates grinned in anticipation of a par-
ticularly funny account of an imaginary
death for Black Jack. But Steve's
laughter increased; his face was red
with suppressed merriment.

"Come, Steve," said a cockney sailor,
encouragingly, "let's 'ave the joke;
don't be a-keepin' it all to yerself."

"Why, ye blessed galoots," chorled
Steve at last, "I could tell ye a story of
Black Jack would make yer eyes
water. Here you chaps is a talkin' of
Black Jack, with me here as could tell
ye more about him than any man livin'."

And Steve shook with keen ap-
preciation of the humor of it.

"Well, why don't you tell us?" sug-
gested the cockney.

"Well," panted Steve, between
spasms, "seein' as how I am with a
crowd as can appreciate the funny side
of a good story, I am goin' to oblige ye."

"Ye see, fellers, I was bos'n's mate
of the Southern Cross the trip Black
Jack croaked."

"Well, I be hanged," ejaculated sev-
eral of the men together.

Steve chuckled at the astonishment
in their faces.

"You bet," he continued, "an' I am
the boy as can tell ye a few things
about that trip."

"We left Liverpool for Frisco with
general cargo an' a crowd o' green
cockneys aboard as didn't know the
spanker boom from a marlin spike.

Naturally, Black Jack piled into 'em
before we got clear of Ushant light,
an' the scuppers was red with blood
night an' day.

"Well, about five days out we struck
a bit of nasty weather, an' one night
all hands was up aloft reefin' the fore
upper topsail. Black Jack was up
there in the bunt lookin' arter the job."

"It so happened as I was next to
him, but he didn't know it was me.
Well, something happened to rile him,
and first thing I knew he landed on
my jaw an' nearly sent me down on
deck. Fancy him takin' me for a blast-
ed limejuicer."

Steve stopped for a moment to thor-
oughly enjoy Black Jack's mistake.

"Well," he continued, "when his
laughter had subsided, 'when we got
down I told him as how he had hit me
by mistake. But, blast me, he didn't
see the joke."

"Good for ye," sez he.
"Well, naturally, that kind o' riled
me, 'bein' taken for a bloomin' green-
horn, an' I told Black Jack right then
as how I'd fix him in Frisco. Upon
which he fetches me an upper cut that
sends me down to leeward into the
scuppers."

"Well, things went along that way
until we got down into the trades, an'
one night a funny idea struck me as I
was a-pacin' the deck. Ye remember,
Black Jack was bow-legged, an' I was
larfin' to myself, wonderin' how he'd
look swimmin' with them bow legs."

"Ever see a bow-legged man swim?
Funnest thing yet. But Black Jack
was the bow-leggedest man ye ever
see."

"That idea stuck to me for a long
time, an' whenever I'd think of it,
night or day, I'd larf. I was just
a-hankerin' to see Black Jack swim
with them bow legs o' his a-waggin' behind."

"One night, in the middle watch, the
chap at the wheel wanted to be re-
lieved a few minutes, so I went and
took the wheel while he went for'd.
Black Jack was pacin' the poop slowly,
it bein' a sultry night. Pretty soon he
goes up to the weather rail and leans
agin it, kind o' sleepy."

"Well, fellers, them legs o' his never
looked so bowed as they did then. I
could already fancy him kickin' them
out as he was swimmin'."

"The more I thought, the stronger
that idea got. Thinks I to myself,
'here's a man wot makes the world all
the worse for bein' in it; why not give
him a boost into a better world?'"

"An' I thinks o' the easy times wot
would come to the poor chaps for'd
wot he had lambasted o' every one.
An' I thinks o' when he smashed me,
too. But, most of all, I wanted to see
a bow-legged man swim."

"Say, you fellers don't know what a
good larf it is to see a bow-legged
man swim. I've seen it once."

Here Steve broke off his narrative to
chuckle over funny memories.

"Well," he resumed, "at last I
couldn't stand it no longer. There was
Black Jack a-leavin' over the rail an'
there was me dyin' to see him swim.
So I steadies the helm pretty good, an'
then kicks off my slippers, easy like,
so's he couldn't hear."

"An' then I leaves the wheel, softly,
an' creeps up to the weather rail, an'
so help me, there was Black Jack
a-snoozin'! Yessir, sleepin' on his
watch. Him as would lam a poor fel-
low from for'd dead for doin' that same
thing. Wot yer think o' that?"

"He was leavin' over pretty far, hold-
in' on to a awning stanchion. Wot yer
think I did? Ye'd never guess."

"The canvas draw bucket was layin'
on the skylight, an' it looked so much

like a cork helmet I couldn't help won-
derin' how it would fit Black Jack's
pear-shaped head. So I snaked over to
the skylight an' cut on the rope."

"Then I tried it on my head, an' it
was just a trifle too big. But, thinks
I, it'll jest fit Black Jack, a tight fit,
too, so's he couldn't get it off."

"Back to the weather rail I tip toes
until I stands jest in back o' Black
Jack. His head was fast in a daisy
position, so I carefully raises the draw
bucket above it, an' down I plumps it
—jest jammed it down tight to his
shoulders."

"Well, fellers, ye'd a larfed to see
the jump he made, like a chicken with
its head cut off, a floppin' his arms like
they was wings. Yes, sir, jest like a
bloomin' chicken."

The simile struck Steve's sense of
humor so strongly that it was some
moments before he could continue.
Even some of his audience laughed
with him.

"But that was only for a minute,"
he continued. "'Fore he could do some-
thing I 'ups with his heels,' as the
chap on the Nancy Bell would 'a' said,
an' over he went, with the draw bucket
stuck fast an' a-smotherin' his
squeals."

The humor of the situation—ghastly
humor, perhaps—so struck all hands,
owing more to Steve's manner than to
his words, that all burst out into a
long guffaw. The idea of Black Jack
diving to his death with a draw bucket
over his head seemed ridiculously
funny.

"Well, fellers," said Steve, after he
had wiped the tears from his own eyes,
'the ship was goin' a bare three knots,
an' the moon was out. I could see the
white foam spot where he went down,
an' aft I runs to the log line an'
watches."

"Will ye believe me—but it's true—
all of a sudden I sees that white canvas
draw bucket pop up with his two
arms a-wavin' on each side o' it. An'
there was them bow legs o' his a-wag-
gin' behind, like crabs' nippers. Oh,
say, fellers—"

Again Steve went off into peals of
merriment. Finally he was able to re-
sume.

"Well, boys, I jest leaned over the
rail an' larfed fit to bust myself. The
way he was tryin' to holler through
that draw bucket an' couldn't would
'a' given ye fits if ye'd 'a' heard the
way he was a-rippin' up inside."

"I kinder reckon the cuss words he
was lettin' out weighed the bucket
down an' them, with the iron band,
sent him nose down. Larst I see was
his two bow legs a-kickin' up in the
air, an' then I went back to the wheel."

"When the chap came back to re-
lieve me I didn't say nothin', but pretty
soon the third mate misses Black Jack,
an' as he couldn't find him he goes an'
calls the skipper."

"The man comes on deck, and we
squares in our yards an' sails back over
our course, burnin' blue lights an'
shoutin', an' I was shoutin' louder 'an
any 'em, but you bet they didn't see
no signs of Black Jack with his head
in a draw bucket."

"Say, fellers, wot ye suppose old Nick
said when he saw Black Jack comin'
with that draw bucket over his head?
Blessed if I wouldn't 'a' been willin' to
stand the high temperature for a few
minutes jest to see what happened."

The idea seemed so humorous to
the Happy Steve that the story ended in
a long, loud laugh, interpolated with
humorous comments on an imaginary
conversation between his Satanic maj-
esty and Black Jack, with the draw
bucket presenting difficulties in the
way of mutual recognition.

Happy Steve often referred to the
murder he had committed, and each
time he sprinkled his story with hearty
laughter.

When we arrived in Australia Happy
Steve cleared out for the Swan River
gold diggings. Later, we heard that
he met his finish there, but he died as
he lived—in a humorous way.

He cracked some joke up there that
wasn't appreciated by the English
miners, and it precipitated a shooting
scrape. When the smoke cleared away
three of Steve's opponents were
stretched out, but he himself had
cracked his last joke.

When told that his American humor
had not been understood, he chuckled
immoderately and then died. This ac-
count may not be exactly true, but it
was characteristic of him.

Some years later I met a man who
had been on the Southern Cross on
that same eventful trip, and when I
asked him who was bos'n's mate at
the time, he replied:

"Why, a humorous sort o' chap—a
feller called Steve White."—N. Y. Sun.

The Traveling Story Teller.
The profession of Hakkawati, or
story teller, is a calling officially re-
cognized in oriental countries, and the
fortunate possessor of the necessary
gift is sure of a welcome and a liveli-
hood wherever he goes. "It is this
man," says an authority on oriental
customs, "who beyond all others re-
lieves the monotony of eastern life."

I have seen the Arabian Hakkawati
seated in the middle of a large crowd,
with the freight throwing a ruddy
glow over his mobile features, bring-
ing out clearly their varying expres-
sions, as he warms to his tale. The Arabs
have a saying that 'smiles and tears
are in the same Khurfa,' or wallet,
and so well does the real Hakkawati
know his business that, hour after
hour, he can make his dark-skinned
audience shake with laughter or sob
in sympathy with the woes of some
imaginary heroine, or shiver and feel
for their daggers, ready to spring to
their feet to avenge some dastardly
act of cruelty. No 'dime novel' of the
western world could be more thrilling
than this legendary fiction of the
people of the far east."

Condensed for Four Days.
"There was a good old lawyer of the
good old southern type," said President
Woodrow Wilson, of Princeton, recent-
ly, "who had a most eloquent way of
pleading. His brief for three days had
been a marvel of classical allusion and
legal erudition. The judge, however,
became a trifle impatient, and, as gen-
tly as he could, intimated that the
docket was somewhat crowded and it
might be to the client's interest if the
lawyer could contrive to end his plea.
And do you know, the old barrister
declares that the last four days of his
argument were a marvel of condensa-
tion."—N. Y. Tribune.

RUSSIAN EMPEROR'S JOKE.

An Amusing Episode in the Wan-
derings of Alexander Among
the People.

A young protégé of Count Nesselrode,
a sailor, who did not know the Russian
emperor by sight, had been sent with
important dispatches to Vienna, where
Alexander of Russia was staying. Alex-
ander enjoyed wandering about the
streets there as well as in his own cap-
ital, and one morning his majesty,
dressed in a simple military greatcoat,
noticed on leaving the palace a young
naval officer apparently trying to find
his way, and examining the entrance of
the imperial residence, totally at a loss
how to set his helm. The story is told
in "Anecdotal Recollections of the Con-
gress of Vienna" by Comte de la Garde-
Chambonas.

"You seem to be looking for some-
thing," said the emperor.

"That's true," answered the sailor. "I
have a dispatch to remit personally to
the emperor of Russia. They told me
to go to the Burg, and here I am; but as
I am a stranger in Vienna, I haven't a
soul either to guide or to introduce me."

Alexander was delighted with the
frank and open face of the young man,
and thought he would keep up his in-
cognito a little longer.

"You'll not find the emperor now," he
said. "He's not at the palace, but at two
o'clock he is sure to receive you."

The conversation went on in the same
amiable and familiar tone, the czar in-
terrogating the officer on his family, his
career and his prospects. The young
fellow told him that, having entered the
service when he was very young, he
had never been to court, and had never
seen his sovereign.

Finally, after half an hour's talk,
Alexander, turning to the young "sailor,"
said in an affectionate tone: "You can
give me your letter, sir. I am Alexan-
der."

"That's a clever joke," replied the
other, laughing, "but you don't expect
me to believe it."

"You may believe it or not, but I am
the emperor of Russia."

"I dare say, just as I am the emperor
of China."

Alexander, getting thoroughly amused,
decided to continue it. In a short time
they reached the fortifications, and
Alexander espied the king of Prussia
coming toward him.

"Do you speak German?" he asked his
companion.

"Not a word," replied the other.

Immediately Alexander took a few
steps in front of him and spoke a few
words in German to Frederick William;
then he came back to the young sailor
and took him by the hand.

"Here is an excellent opportunity of
presenting you to the king of Prussia,"
he remarked.

"Sir, an officer of my fleet, whom I
have the honor to present to your majesty."

"We are getting on rapidly," said the
young fellow. "This gentleman is the
king of Prussia, who is the emperor of
Russia, and I am the emperor of China."

Scarcely had they reached the ram-
parts when the crowd began to surround
the two monarchs with their accustomed
marks of deference. M. de Richelieu
advanced, hat in hand, and addressed
Alexander as "Your majesty."

The young officer recognized him at once,
and perceived instantly that he had
been the victim of a royal mystification.
He was, however, soon reassured by the
kindly look of Alexander, and he
promptly delivered his dispatches to
him. The emperor took them with a
gracious and significant smile, and after
inviting the young sailor to dine with
him that day, dismissed him with the
most kindly gestures.

HE DROPPED THE SUBJECT.

And After Such a Dig as He Received
It Was Not to Be Won-
dered At.

"Ten thousand dollars for a dog!" he
exclaimed as he looked up from his
newspaper. "Do you believe anyone
ever paid any such price, James?"

"I'm sure I don't know, James," she
returned, without stopping her needle
work even for a moment, relates the
Brooklyn Eagle. "Does the paper say
that much was paid?"

"Yes. There's an article on valuable
dogs and it speaks of one that sold for
\$10,000. I don't believe it."

"It may be true, James," she said
quietly. "Some of these blooded an-
imals bring fancy prices, and there's
no particular reason why the paper
should lie about it."

"I know that, Maria, but just think
of it: Just try to grasp the magnitude
of that sum in your weak, feminine
mind. You don't seem to realize it.
Ten thousand dollars for a dog! Why,
hang it, Maria, that's more than I am
worth!"

"I know it, Joseph, but some are
worth more than others."

She went calmly on with her sewing,
while he fumed and sputtered for a
moment, and then dropped the subject,
especially the weak, feminine mind
part of it.

Reciprocal Concessions.
Mrs. Bumpus—Your plan, as I un-
derstand it, is that we shall make mu-
tual concessions—each sacrificing
something for the good of the other.
Am I right?

Mr. Bumpus—Perfectly.
"Then I will give up eating bonbons."
"Good for you, my dear. And now
what shall I give up?"

"Well, for the present, I guess about
\$25 for a new hat will be sufficient."
Philadelphia Telegraph.

Americans in England.
The American is never called a fore-
igner by his English kin. Neither the
Royal Academy nor the Inns of Court
exclude Americans under their rules
which disqualify foreigners.

Extravagance.
A girl doesn't consider a man extrava-
gant if he spends all he makes on her.—
Chicago Daily News.

Gets Back Little Change.
When a man pays the price of fame
he never gets as much change back as
he expected.

HER "CUDDLE ARM."

Little Mother of the Tenements Felt
Homesick When It Was
Empty.

"Oh, no," said the nurse, walking
down the long corridor with a visitor
just leaving the children's ward, "it
was only her knee; her arm isn't in-
jured. What made you think it was?"

"Why, the odd way she holds it, I sup-
pose," answered the visitor. "Bent all
the time, and curled round a gathered-
up bunch of coverlet. What makes her do
that? I should think she would get
cramp."

The nurse smiled queerly, recounts
Youth's Companion.

"Yes; it doesn't look altogether com-
fortable, but she isn't comfortable un-
less we let her do it. At first we tried
to prevent her, and she always changed
the position when we told her to, but
she would cry quietly to herself. There
was no real harm, so at that we sur-
rendered and let her have her way, but
for a long while we couldn't find out
what made her want to do it; it was such
a queer whim. She couldn't seem to
give any reason, and we thought it was
just a stupid little obstinate notion with
no meaning; but at last she got over
being shy with us, and then she told
she's 11, you know—only just 11."

The visitor nodded. "Yes—well?"

"Well, her reason was because—this
is how she put it—it made her more
homesick to feel her 'cuddle arm' empty.
You see, ever since she was big enough
to stagger with a baby, there's been a
baby for her to carry. She's one of the
little mothers from the tenements.

She's been with us a good many weeks
now, and although her mother and fa-
ther get out here once in awhile to see
her, it's too far to walk with the other
children, and there are no car fares to
spare while the father is out of a job.
She's friendly enough with the other
children of the ward, and she isn't lon-
ely or unhappy; but whenever she lies
quiet by herself, or gets a touch of
homesickness from being tired or in
pain, she misses her little brothers and
sisters, and especially the baby—my
baby!" she calls it. Then she pulls the
quilt into that little bunch, shuts her
eyes, and tries to imagine she has her
baby back on her cuddle arm."

The women looked at each other,
caught each other's blinking tears, and
laughed.

"And she ought to be playing with
dolls," murmured the visitor, "a child
like that! But—give me the address,
at any rate. She shall hold the baby in
her cuddle arm next visitors' day, if I
have to marshal the whole family in
procession."

FOND OF FIGHTING.

In Almost Everyone There Is a De-
sire to Take Part In or Wit-
ness a Contest.

We are all fond of fighting. That is,
we all love to look at a fight and some
of us like to be in a fight. But we all love
to see one, says the San Francisco
Argonaut. There are some superlatives
and hyper-refined humans of both
sexes who think they do not like to see a
fight; some of them actually believe they
are sincere. But deep down in the aver-
age man and woman the love of fight
exists. It is ingrained. It is congenital.
It is in the human baby. When he
screams, squalls and kicks if his will is
thwarted he is fighting.

So with the same baby when, grown
up into a boy, he pulls his little sister's
hair. It is partly, perhaps, the love
of fighting and partly, perhaps, the love
of giving pain, for cruelty also seems
to be part of the makeup of the human
animal. After little brother has finished
pulling little sister's hair and she has
dried her eyes she soothes her wounded
feeling by pulling off flies' wings and
legs or pinching the cat's tail under a
rocking chair. Of the higher flights of
juvenile cruelty to which her brother
rises when he ties two cats together by
their tails over a clothes line, where they
fight till nothing is left but their tail
tips—of these familiar facts we will not
speak.

When brother goes to school and then
to college—whether it be to the English
"public" school or to the American "pub-
lic school"—resembling each other only
in name—to the academy, to the pre-
paratory school, to the university, he
speedily becomes past master in cruelty.
In most of these institutions he must
fight. Having exists in every college in
the country. Even the United States
government cannot stamp it out at